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UNCLAS MUSCAT 001588

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/ARPI, NEA/PPD, NEA/P, INR/R/MR

LONDON FOR TSOU
PARIS FOR ZEYA
USCENTCOM FOR PLUSH
FOREIGN PRESS CENTER FOR SILAS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KPAO](#) [KMDR](#) [OIIP](#) [MU](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: MEHLIS REPORT, ARAB LEAGUE, AND SYRIA

Malice Towards Mehliis

[1](#)1. The privately owned Arabic daily "al-Watan" ran an editorial on October 23 entitled "About The Mehliis Report":

"The Mehliis report was well-received in Lebanon, but it would have been better for Mr. Mehliis to provide us with a comprehensive report, supported by substantial evidence and buttressed by real names. Instead, the report is incomplete, confused, dubious, and can be interpreted in many ways. Fingers have long been pointed at the involvement of the Syrian and Lebanese security services in the assassination of Rafik al-Hariri, and this report also appears to implicate President Lahoud. However, it will take more than this vague, obscure document to prove any culpability."

Fair And Balanced

[1](#)2. "Oman," the government-owned Arabic daily, featured an editorial on October 22 entitled "Iraq, Past And Present":

"The efforts of the Arab League and its Secretary General Amre Moussa to improve the situation in Iraq are balanced and moderate. These efforts have taken the interests of all parties - without exception - into consideration. At the same time, the Arabs are trying to stop the bloodshed of innocent Iraqis as well as of the American soldiers, who on a daily basis are paying the price of the bad policies designed in the corridors of European capitals. Such efforts should receive the continuous support of fellow Arab states, in a clear and obvious manner, so that the entire world is reassured that the Arab League is working for peace."

You Can't Be Serious

[1](#)3. The privately owned Arabic daily "al-Shabiba" published an editorial on October 23 entitled "Syria Is The Key":

"In a statement before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee last Wednesday, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice announced that the Bush administration would be taking new diplomatic steps to isolate Syria. Rice renewed the administration's accusations towards Syria, alleging that Damascus allows foreign militants to cross its borders on their way to Iraq . . . There is an American project, better known as UN Security Council Resolution 1559, which is being exploited by the U.S. in order to please Israel. This American project started with the evacuation of Syrian troops from Lebanon, moved on to accusing the Syrians of allowing terrorists to cross into Iraq, and now aims to implicate Syria in the Rafik al-Hariri assassination."

BALTIMORE